

Articulated Window Panel For Vehicles  
FLUSH-MOUNTED HINGED WINDOW ASSEMBLY AND  
METHOD FOR MAKING SAME

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

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This invention relates generally to flush-mounted window assemblies for vehicles and more particularly, to flush-mounted vehicular window assemblies which articulate about a hinge attached to one side of the window in a manner to achieve long-term reliability.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In an effort to make automobiles more fuel-efficient, automobile exterior designs are becoming more streamlined. To achieve this goal, automobile manufacturers are requiring flush-mounted panel and window assemblies. The goal is to locate the panel or window within the vehicle such that the peripheral edge of the panel or window assembly is recessed and the outer surface of the panel is generally flush with any adjoining body panels. In the case of fixed panels, a conventional technique includes placing or running a bead of adhesive material around the entire inside peripheral edge of the panel and bonding it in the vehicle opening. While satisfactory for stationary windows, this method creates problems with movable windows, however, particularly those which articulate about a hinge.

Conventional articulated or hinged windows are fixed to the vehicle by a mounting assembly which is fastened by a stud passing through a hole drilled in the panel. A low profile nut is then threaded onto the stud extending through the panel to retain the panel thereon. A major disadvantage is that a significant number of glass panels are broken as a result of drilling the holes through the panel. The panels are also broken during or after mounting of the mounting hardware. To avoid the breakage of the glass panel, sophisticated techniques have been adopted to drill the

holes, and the mounting hardware has been adapted to reduce breakage. As a result, the price of such panel assemblies is unnecessarily high. Moreover, the resulting panel is not truly flush since the mounting hardware has a positive relief with respect to the panel exterior surface.

5                   Another attempt to reduce the exterior profile of articulated window assemblies is disclosed in U.S. Patent 4,396,221 which employs a channel extending around the edge of the window pane, a flexible resilient portion allowing pivotal movement of the window pane, and one of several types of fasteners. Such fasteners include a clip with a detent received in the seal and securing the hinge and thus the  
10                   assembly to a pinch weld flange.

                  Another embodiment of the hinged window assembly just described includes a substantially rectilinear hinge member which includes a retaining end bonded to the exterior or front surface of the window panel by an adhesive and an opposing retaining end having an aperture which receives a metal screw extending  
15                   into the vehicle body. Seated on the pinch-weld flange is a sealing weather strip which forms a closed bulbous portion engaging both the inside surface of the pane as well as a shoulder of the recess leading to the pinch weld flange on the exterior sheet metal body portion. To conceal the fastener for the hinge, a metal covering extending from the vehicle roof or another portion of the vehicle may extend over the fastener  
20                   and a substantial portion of the hinge.

                  A disadvantage associated with each of the above hinged windows is that the hinge member is fixed to the exterior surface of the panel. In addition, in the last embodiment described above, the fastener securing the assembly to the vehicle is exposed, or must include a special cover member. Accordingly, the exterior profile  
25                   of these window assemblies do not result in a truly flush-mounted, articulated window assembly.

Although known in the art to adhesively bond metal to glass for a variety of purposes such as stud attachments, small hinge plates, etc., known hinge adhesives and hinge designs are inadequate to meet load requirements and long-term environmental resilience required for flush-mounted, hinged window assemblies.

5 Hinge mounting of large size, flush-mounted panels in the nature of van windows is a demanding application of adhesive technology. The higher weight of such a window transmits more severe vibration requiring greater strength and greater long-term environmental resilience and durability than is available with such prior known bonds. Styling and design limitations restrict the number of hinges and the size of the bond  
10 areas.

Accordingly, there is now a need for large panels such as van or tailgate windows having a flush mounted hinge, and an improved bond between a hinge member and the single panel surface to which it is attached to support the panel.

#### 15 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention includes a unique articulated window assembly especially for vehicles, and a method for manufacturing the panel assembly.

The panel assembly of this invention is especially useful as a flush-mounted vehicle window assembly, and includes, in combination, a panel having  
20 inner and outer surfaces which terminate in a peripheral edge and give the panel a predetermined geometric shape. At least one mounting member is secured to the inner surface of the panel and spaced from the peripheral edge. An adhesive is used to bond a flange of the mounting member to the inner surface of the panel. The resulting bond between the mounting member flange and the panel is sufficiently  
25 strong such that when a load sufficient to induce failure is imposed between the mounting member and the panel, failure of the panel assembly results other than in

the adhesion of the adhesive to the mounting member or panel. More specifically, failure may occur as cohesive failure of the adhesive, mechanical failure of the mounting member adjacent the adhesive, or mechanical failure of the panel adjacent the adhesive. The bond is preferably strong enough to withstand a failure load of at least 150 pounds.

One embodiment of the invention includes an articulated window assembly for use in a vehicle wherein the window assembly is mounted in the window opening from the inner surface with the opposite surface generally flush with the exterior surface of the vehicle. The articulated window assembly includes, in combination, a transparent sheet having inner and outer surfaces terminating in a peripheral edge and defining a shape to fit within the window opening. At least one window-mounting member is bonded to the inner surface of the sheet at a position spaced inwardly from the peripheral edge and fixing the sheet in the window opening. The mounting member may include a plurality of projections extending therefrom for spacing the mounting member from the inner surface of the sheet by a predetermined distance. One or more adhesives are provided between the inner surface of the sheet and the mounting member for bonding the sheet and mounting member together in such a manner that when tested under a straight pull test of more than 150 pounds applied at a rate greater than 25 millimeters per minute, failure will occur generally in the sheet, the mounting member or the cohesiveness of the adhesive will fail, but the adhesion of the adhesive to the sheet or mounting member will not fail. Such strength is also maintained after soaking in 80°C water for at least 100 hours.

Another embodiment of the invention includes a hinged window panel having a shape to fit within the window opening of a vehicle with an outer surface of the peripheral edge aligned generally flush with an outer surface of the window opening. At least one hinge assembly includes a flange portion which is located on

the inner surface of the panel inwardly from the peripheral edge and a hinged portion for engaging the window opening. At least one latch-mounting member is provided having a base portion located on the inner surface of the panel inwardly from the peripheral edge and spaced from the hinge assembly. The latch-mounting member  
5 also includes an end portion to receive a latch interconnected to the inside of the window opening. A first adhesive is optionally provided having a quick set-up time, for temporarily fixturing the hinge assembly and the latch-mounting member to the inner surface of the panel. A second adhesive is then provided for permanently bonding the hinge assembly and latch member to the inner surface of the panel and  
10 has a set-up or cure time greater than the first adhesive.

According to additional aspects of the invention, the panel or transparent sheet may further include an opaque coating such as a ceramic frit between the inner surface of the panel and the adhesive bonding the mounting member, hinge or latch member, to the panel. An adhesion-promoting compound  
15 may also be applied to the opaque coating, mounting member, hinge or latch-mounting member, to enhance the bond with the adhesive.

The panel assemblies of this invention have advantages over the prior art in that the mounting members do not need to be fixed by holes drilled through the panel yet provide a strong and resilient bond between the panel and the vehicle.  
20 Another advantage is that the mounting members no longer wrap around the exterior edge of the window panel or are exposed on the exterior of the window panel. Moreover, the panel assembly of this invention may be manufactured rapidly without complex machines, and is highly adapted for support of larger sized, heavier windows in vehicles in which significant vibration is encountered. Because the mounting  
25 members are fixed to the panel by an adhesive, fewer panels are broken during the manufacturing process. A still further advantage of the panel assembly of this

invention is that the mounting members do not extend through and protrude from the panel, but are concealed on the inner surface of the panel which results in a flush, more streamlined and aesthetically pleasing panel assembly appearance.

The above advantages, purposes and other features of the invention will become apparent from a study of the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the appended drawing figures.

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#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

Fig. 1 is a fragmentary perspective view of the articulated panel assembly of this invention mounted as a side window in a vehicle;

Fig. 2 is a side elevational view of an exterior surface of the articulated panel assembly of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a side elevational view of the opposite, inner surface of the articulated panel assembly shown in Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a plan view of one embodiment of a hinge mounted on the panel of Figs. 1-3;

Fig. 5 is a fragmentary sectional view of the panel and hinge taken along line V-V in Fig. 4;

Fig. 6 is a fragmentary sectional view of the panel and hinge taken along line VI-VI in Fig. 4;

Fig. 7 is a fragmentary plan view of one embodiment of a mounting stud for use in association with a latching mechanism, the stud being mounted on the panel assembly of Figs. 1-3;

Fig. 8 is a fragmentary sectional view of the panel assembly and mounting stud taken along line VIII-VIII in Fig. 7;

Fig. 8A is a fragmentary sectional view of the panel assembly and mounting stud taken along line VIIIA-VIIIA in Fig. 8;

Fig. 9 is a fragmentary sectional view of the panel assembly in a closed position on a vehicle and taken along line IX-IX in Fig. 1;

Fig. 10 is a fragmentary sectional view of the panel assembly on a vehicle and taken along line X-X in Fig. 1;

5 Fig. 11 is a fragmentary sectional view of the panel assembly on a vehicle and taken along line XI-XI in Fig. 1;

Fig. 12 is a fragmentary sectional view of the panel assembly on a vehicle and taken along line XII-XII in Fig. 1;

10 Fig. 13 is a fragmentary plan view of another embodiment of a hinge adapted for mounting on the panel of Figs. 1-3;

Fig. 14 is a fragmentary sectional view of the panel and hinge taken along line XIV-XIV in Fig. 13; and

Fig. 15 is a fragmentary sectional view of the hinge of Figs. 13 and 14 taken along line XV-XV in <sup>Fig. 14</sup> Fig. 13.

15 DE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Although this invention relates to flush-mounted articulated window panels for vehicles, the advantages of this invention are best realized in large flush-mounted articulated window panels such as used in side windows for vans, rear lift gate windows for vans, station wagons, utility vehicles, and trucks, and other vehicles  
20 such as aeronautical, nautical, rail, and other forms of transportation, which exerts substantial loads on the bonds between the mounting hardware and the window panel. such window panels have surface areas typically greater than 250 square inches.

Referring now to the drawings in greater detail, panel assembly 12 of the present invention is disposed on a vehicle 10 within a window opening 14 formed  
25 in the vehicle exterior 16. Panel or window assembly 12 is adapted to articulate or pivot about a pair of mounting members 30 (Figs. 3-6) positioned proximate

peripheral edge 18 of inside surface 22. Panel assembly 12 is opened or closed about mounting members 30 by a second mounting member 32 (Figs. 2-3) interconnecting the vehicle 10 to a second portion of panel assembly 12 distant and spaced from mounting members 30. Although panel assembly 12 is shown pivoting about an axis proximate the leading peripheral edge 18, it is contemplated that this invention may also be used to articulate panels such as a rear window or tailgate window about a horizontal axis as well.

In one embodiment, panel assembly 12 includes a panel or sheet 24 having outer and inner surfaces 20, 22, respectively. Panel 24 is preferably transparent glass which may be tempered, laminated, or otherwise strengthened using conventional techniques and principles. Panel 24 may be curved, bent or generally planar, having two substantially parallel sides, surfaces, or faces 20, 22 terminating in a peripheral edge 18 forming a panel having a predetermined geometric shape. Although transparent glass is preferred, other sheet-like panel materials may also be used, such as opaque or coated glass, transparent coated or opaque plastic materials, or multi-composite laminates, such as transparent glass and plastic.

Optionally and preferably, deposited on and bonded to surface 22 of panel 24 is an opaque, and preferably black frit layer 26, and most preferably, a ceramic frit layer or coating covering and concealing a region of surface 22 from peripheral edge 18 inward. Alternatively, frit layer 26 may cover all or substantially all of surface 22. Usually, however, frit layer 26 conceals a continuous peripheral strip of surface 22 near edge 18, such as two inches in from edge 18, as shown in Figs. 2 and 3.

Glass panel 24, which is initially in an untempered condition after cutting and sizing to its desired shape, can be painted by screen coating or other techniques, with a coating of dark ceramic paint on its inner surface 22. Thereafter,



glass panel 24 is heated and bent to the desired contour with a bending furnace or other bending apparatus, followed by tempering to strengthen the glass. Such heating, bending and tempering operations cause the ceramic paint 26 to become fused to surface 22. Thus, although starting as a layer of paint containing ceramic particles and pigment, coating 26 ends up after bending and tempering, as a thin frit layer of ceramic material, which, in actuality, is fused to surface 22 of glass panel 24. Since ceramic frit coating 26 includes a pigment of a desired color, preferably a dark color such as black or the like, the layer results in a permanent, second or inside surface coloration of glass panel 24. When viewed from the opposite or outer side 20, the transparent thickness of panel 24, backed up by the colored ceramic frit layer 26, provides an appearance of depth and richness which blends well with the surrounding painted or glass areas on a vehicle.

One ceramic paint used to form the opaque black ceramic frit coating 26, described above, is manufactured by the Drakenfeld Pigments Division of Ciba-Geigy Corporation located in Washington, Pennsylvania. Such paint includes small ceramic particles and a suitable metal oxide pigment suspended in oil of a type conventionally known in the art. The resulting frit layer is opaque and normally black in color. This ceramic paint is preferably screen-coated on a predetermined portion of inner surface 20 of panel 24 using a 200-mesh screen. Ceramic particles in layer 26 are melted and fused to one another, are permanently bonded and fused to the inner glass surface 22, and form the equivalent of the glass itself in terms of strength and adherence.

Fixed to ceramic frit layer 26 and spaced inwardly from peripheral edge 18 toward the center of the panel are at least one, and preferably no more than two, mounting members 30, and at least one member 32 which cooperate to retain and articulate panel assembly 24 within window opening 14. Each mounting member

30, 32, is bonded at least 0.125 inch inboard of peripheral edge 18 to panel inner surface 22 to retain panel 24 within window opening 14 without the need to extend a fastener through the sheet-like panel 24 or encapsulate the peripheral edge 18 of panel 24 with a resinous gasket extending around the panel edge on both inner and outer surfaces or the like. Described in greater detail below, the bond between mounting members 30, 32 and glass panel 24 and/or frit layer 26 is sufficient to withstand loads greater than 150 pounds, preferably greater than 250 pounds, and most preferably about 300 pounds, even after environmental exposure. The resulting bond is such that if failure occurs under these loads, the failure mode is other than in the adhesive bond interface between mounting members 30, 32 and panel 24. That is to say, if a failure occurs in the bond between mounting members 30, 32 and panel 24 under a load, the failure mode will be a mechanical failure of the substrate (mounting member or panel) or in the cohesion of the adhesive itself. For the purposes of this description, the adhesive bond or adhesion of the adhesive with the mounting member or panel is the ability of the adhesive to adhere to the substrate. Cohesion is the ability of the adhesive to bond with itself.

In one embodiment (Figs. 4-6), each mounting member 30 is a 0.1 to 10.0 millimeter (mm) thick, and preferably 0.5 to 1.0 mm thick, 1050 spring steel hinge having an elongate flange portion 34 with one edge 36 defining an adjoining tab 38. Tab 38 is offset from the plane of flange 34 by leg 37. Tab 38 is thus bent in an S-shaped form with respect to flange 34 although the free end portion tab 38 is generally parallel to flange 34. The bends between tab 38 and flange 34, and particularly leg 37, provide a spring-like hinge, the operation of which will become readily apparent below. Hinge flange 34 may also be prestressed or bent to conform to the surface of panel 24, especially if the panel is curved. In this regard, it is desirable to have a convex curvature to the surface of hinge flange 34 that is

adhesively bonded to panel surface 24. This results in not only a more uniform adhesive bond, but also evenly distributes any load along the bonding surface and economizes the amount of adhesive used. Extending through tab 38 and away from panel 24 is a stud 52, having a head 53 bonded with or welded to tab 38. The opposite end of stud 52 is to be fastened to the vehicle as explained below.

Optionally, formed in flange portion 34, and extending therethrough, are a plurality of holes 40 generally aligned along the longitudinal axis of the flange. The size of each hole may range from 0.1 to 10 mm or more, but is preferably about 3.0 millimeters. In the preferred embodiment, holes 40 are spaced equidistantly from each other with the center points between the holes being approximately eight and one-half millimeters apart. The size and spacing of holes 40 are designed to provide optimum access of both air and moisture/humidity to permeate to an underlying adhesive described in greater detail below. The perforations also reduce the weight of each hinge, and provide a mechanical surface to bond with the adhesive and aid in bonding the hinge to the panel.

Flange portion 34 also contains embossments 42 adjacent aligned holes 40 which extend from a lower surface 44 of flange 34 and serve to space flange 34 from the inner surface 22 of panel 24. In a preferred embodiment, embossments 42 extend from flange 34 by a distance on the order of 0.1 to 3.0 mm, and preferably 1.0 mm. The actual distance may vary depending on the type of adhesive used. However, this offset distance has been found to be quite adequate for the variety of adhesives described below. Holes 40 and embossments 42 may be easily formed in flange portion 34 by stamping or punching during the formation of spring hinge 30.

For panel assemblies employing a single hinge 30, it is preferred that the surface area of flange 34 bonded to panel 24 be approximately between 4 square inches and 50 square inches, and most preferably approximately 15 square inches.

On a two-hinge system, each hinge would preferably have a bonding area approximately between 2 and 50 inches square, and most preferably on the order of 4 square inches. <sup>A2</sup> The aspect ratio (ratio of length to width) of each hinge, no matter whether a single hinge or dual hinge system, is preferably greater than 1 but less than 1,000, and most preferably approximately 8 to 10. Dimensions may vary depending upon the specific application. However, the hinge design is intended to provide the most bonding strength and structural stability economically and concealing the hinge in the frit area on the panel.

Although hinge 30 is described as being made from spring steel, other materials may also be used such as cold rolled steel, plastics, composite materials and other materials which are capable of withstanding flexural or bending moments. These materials will become apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Referring to Figs. 5 and 6, flange 34 of hinge 30 has its lower surface 44 bonded to frit layer 26 by a first and second adhesive 46 and 48, respectively. In a preferred embodiment, adhesive 48 is a temporary fixturing adhesive such as a hot-melt thermoplastic, which temporarily locates or fixtures hinge 30 against frit 26, while adhesive 46 cures and forms the permanent primary bond. Adhesive 46 may be selected from a number of adhesives classes including moisture-activated urethanes such as described in United States patent 3,707,521 incorporated herein by reference, moisture-activated silicones, moisture-curable activated urethanes, chemically-activated adhesives, and thermally-activated adhesives, such as shown in Table I below. Other adhesives, such as aerobically-cured, anaerobically-cured, and radiation-cured adhesives can also be used. When cured, the bond-line thickness is in the range of 1 micron to 10 mm, preferably 5 microns to 5 mm, and most preferably 25 microns to 1 mm. For large area vehicle windows where load integrity over a long surface life and through extreme climatic conditions is critical, thermosetting

adhesives such as urethanes, silicones, acrylates, and epoxies are preferred over thermoplastic adhesives such as polyvinylbutyral. For moisture-activated adhesives, it is preferable that the assemblies be exposed to a high humidity atmosphere after initial bonding is achieved in order to promote rapid, complete cure of the adhesive. In this regard, it is preferable that the assemblies be exposed to a relative humidity in excess of 40 percent R.H. and preferably, in excess of 75 percent R.H. for a time period ranging from about 30 minutes to approximately 24 hours, or longer, and at a temperature range from about 60°F to about 250°F, preferably about 75°F to about 110°F. Chemically-activated adhesives can be activated by means such as catalysts, curing agents, and their equivalents as conventionally known in the adhesive arts. Activation can be promoted by heat and/or by radiation including ultraviolet radiation and microwave radiation. Thermally-activated adhesives may be activated by a variety of heating means including convective heating, infrared heating, focused infrared heating, inductive or induction heating, conductive heating, microwave heating and their equivalents such as are described in co-pending United States patent application Serial No. 897,764. <sup>A3</sup> Cure of the bond joint and the assemblies can be promoted and achieved by use of ovens, high humidity chambers, conveyors, heaters and by their combination.

TABLE I

	<u>Manufacturer</u>	<u>Trade Name</u>	<u>Type</u>
5	Essex Specialty Chemicals <sup>1</sup>	BetaSeal™ 57302	Moisture-activated urethane
	Morton Yokohama <sup>2</sup>	WS70-FK	Moisture-activated urethane
10	Sika <sup>3</sup>	Sika-Flex™ 255-FC	Moisture-activated urethane
15	Dow Corning <sup>4</sup>	732	Moisture-activated silicone
	Dow Corning	Q3-6611	Thermally-activated silicone
20	Dow Corning	X3-6265	Thermally-activated silicone
	3M <sup>5</sup>	JetWeld™ TS-230	Moisture-curable hot melt urethane
25	3M	Scotchweld AF-126-2	Thermally-activated modified epoxy
T, 150	3M	Scotchweld AF-163-2U	Thermally-activated modified epoxy
30	Dymax <sup>6</sup>	625-BT	Chemically-activated acrylate
35	Ciba Geigy <sup>7</sup>	R 382-3	Thermally-activated modified epoxy
	Ciba Geigy	R 609	Thermally-activated modified epoxy
40	Dexter Adhesives <sup>8</sup>	EA 9628	Thermally-activated modified epoxy
45	B.F. Goodrich <sup>9</sup>	PL-760	Thermally-activated modified epoxy
	B.F. Goodrich	PL-776	Thermally-activated modified epoxy
50	B.F. Goodrich	PL-633	Thermally-activated nitrile-phenolic

- <sup>1</sup> Essex Specialty Products, Sayreville, New Jersey
- <sup>2</sup> Morton International, Ridgewood Illinois
- <sup>3</sup> Sika, Southfield, Michigan
- <sup>4</sup> Dow Corning, Midland, Michigan
- <sup>5</sup> 3M Corporation, St. Paul, Minnesota
- <sup>6</sup> Dymax, Engineering Adhesives, Torrington, Connecticut
- <sup>7</sup> Ciba Geigy, Anaheim, California
- <sup>8</sup> Dexter Adhesive & Structural Materials of Pittsburgh, California
- <sup>9</sup> B.F. Goodrich, Adhesives Systems Division, Akron, Ohio

It is further preferred that the selected adhesive come in a single package so that no mixing of reactants need occur prior to application. The one-package adhesives provide a much more efficient method than prior adhesives requiring mixing of reactants. It is further preferred that the adhesive have a jelly-like consistency, preferably having a viscosity at 25°C greater than 5 Poise, and most preferably greater than 100 Poise, or can also be a hot-melted adhesive, or in film form for easy application. Adhesive 46 is preferably a urethane adhesive and most preferably a moisture-activated adhesive urethane such as Morton Yokohama WS70-FK, available from Morton International of Ridgewood, Illinois, although epoxies and activated adhesives may also be used. Stand-offs or embossments 42 provide a space between hinge flange 34 and the surface of frit layer 26 for adhesive 46. In addition, holes 40 extending the length of hinge flange 34 allow adhesive 46 to be extruded therethrough to provide a mechanical coupling due to the extension of adhesive over the edges of the holes 40, as well as to provide an avenue for the permeation of moisture to complete the cure of the adhesive.

To improve and promote the bonding characteristics of adhesive 46 glass inner surface 22 or frit layer 26, and/or the lower surface 44 of hinge flange 34 may be coated with an adhesion-promoting compound or primer 50. These adhesion-promoting compounds generally include silanes such as available from Dow Corning, or titanium or zirconium coupling agents such as available from Kenrich Petrochemical, Inc., of Bayon, New Jersey, or equivalents, which greatly enhance the

bonding ability of the adhesive to the substrate. If the primer 50 is applied to frit layer 26 or onto glass surface 22, a preferred primer is designated Morton Yokohama MS-90 available from Morton International in Ridgewood, Illinois. If primer 50 is applied to a metallic surface such as hinge flange 34, a preferred primer is Morton Yokohama RC-50, also available from Morton International. Although these two primers are preferred, they are not the only primers available which may be equally if not more suitable for the application. Although the adhesion-promoting compound 50 may be applied to frit coating 26 and to lower surface 44 of flange 34, Figs. 5 and 6 illustrate the primer compound only on frit coating 26. Adhesive 46, combined with adhesion-promoting compound or primer 50, provides a bond between frit coating 26 and hinge 30, which exceeds standards established by many U.S. automobile manufacturers for window panels. Bonding strengths will vary depending upon the bonding surface area and the types of base materials used. Based upon the materials described herein, the majority of bonds withstood straight pull tests of more than 150 pounds applied at a rate of 25 millimeters per minute without a failure of the cohesion or adhesion after environmental exposure.

In a first embodiment of window panel assembly 12, two hinges 30, such as described above, are bonded to frit coating 26 inwardly from peripheral edge 18 and spaced from each other so as to provide generally balanced support for panel assembly 12. To locate panel assembly 12 within window opening 14, a mounting stud 52 passing through hinge flange or tab 38 is received through an opening 54 formed in a pinch weld flange 56 which defines window opening 14 (see Fig. 10). Stud 52 is then retained within hole 54 by a suitable fastener. In the alternative, stud 52 may be replaced with a self-anchoring fastener such as a Christmas-tree post or other similar fastener.



Distant from hinges 30, and preferably at an opposite end of panel assembly 12, is at least one mounting member 32. See Figs. 1, 7 and 8. In a preferred embodiment, mounting member 32 is a mounting stud having a disk or circular-shaped flange 60 made from 1.0 millimeter thick, 1010 cold rolled steel.

5 Disk 60 has a lower surface 62 which is concave, and an upper surface 64 which is convex, as a result of contours formed by several concentric rings or shoulders 78, 80, respectively, formed in disk 60.

Formed in disk 60 and spaced equidistantly from each other, are a plurality of embossments 42 which define stand-offs extending from lower surface 62 of disk 60 similar to those described above. Between embossments 42, and preferably spaced equidistantly from each other, are holes or rotated lances 66 piercing disk 60. Holes or rotated lances 66 are formed from lower surface 62 through to surface 64. Rotated lances are formed in such a manner so as to produce  
a tag <sup>or vane</sup> 72 inclined above each hole 66 (Fig. 8a).

15 Extending upwardly from surface 64 through a hole 70 located generally in the center of disk 60 is a stud 68. Stud 68 is permanently fixed to disk 60 by welding flange 74 to lower surface 62. Flange 74 of stud 68 lies substantially within the uppermost concave portion 76 of surface 62 to provide a maximum offset between stud flange 74 and panel 24.

20 Disk 60 is bonded to panel 24 in generally the same manner as hinge 30 described above. The inner surface 22 of panel 24 may be coated with opaque frit layer 26 either in an area restricted to that for button stud 60, i.e., slightly larger than the area of lower surface 62 of disk 60, or is generally coated with the frit layer 26 as indicated by dash line 26' shown in Figs. 2 and 3. Lower surface 62 of disk 60 and  
25 frit layer coating 26 are preferably coated with the desired adhesion-promoting primer compound 50 as described above. The central portion of concave surface 62 of disk

60 is permanently bonded to frit layer 26 by adhesive 46 while the peripheral edge of surface 62 is temporarily fixtured to frit layer 26 by a thermoplastic hot-melt or other adhesive 48. Moreover, permanent adhesive 46 mechanically bonds disk 60 to frit layer 26 by a portion of adhesive 46 extruded through holes or rotated lances 66. In the case of rotated lances, extrusion of adhesive 46 is minimized by tab or vane 72 partially damming or restricting flow of adhesive 46 through each rotated lance 66. Embossments or stand-offs 42 extending from lower surface 62 provide a space between panel surface 22 or frit layer 26 and disk 60. Mounting stud or disk 60 is fitted with an appropriate latching <sup>or</sup> ~~of~~ actuating mechanism (not shown) which is attached to the inside of window opening 14 and which is used to actuate window assembly 12 between the open and closed positions via hinges 30. Such actuators include overcenter hinges, as well as pneumatic, electric or cable actuators.

In the alternative to centrally locating adhesive 46 between disk 60 and frit layer 26 as shown in Fig. 8, thermoplastic adhesive 48 may be located below stud flange 74 while a bead of adhesive 46 is placed thereabout. Fixturing of disk 60 is still obtained by the thermoplastic hot-melt or other adhesive 48 located in a central portion of disk 60, while the primary adhesive 46 is then forced outwardly toward the peripheral edges of disk 60 to provide the maximum bonding surface area. In yet another alternative, fixturing adhesive 48 may be omitted and both hinge 30 and mounting member 60 may be mechanically fixtured on panel 24 while the primary adhesive 46 cures. Examples of mechanical fixturing include gravity, mechanical locating, pressing or clamping including robotic, and manual locating, pressing or clamping.

A preferred embodiment of the invention includes hinge 130, shown in Figs. 13-15, made from 1.0 millimeter thick, 1010 cold-rolled, half-hardened, epoxy E-coated steel in a U-shape such that tab portion 138 overlies and is parallel to

elongate flange portion 134. It is preferred that the grain of the steel be oriented generally perpendicular to the axis of the arcuate, U-shaped bend. Leg 137 interconnecting flange 134 and tab 138 is arcuate to provide the spring-like hinge action. Flange 134 contains a plurality of holes 140 which are generally aligned along the longitudinal axis of the flange at equidistantly spaced intervals, preferably approximately 8.5 millimeters. Moreover, the preferred diameter of each hole 140 is about 3.0 millimeters.

Flange 134 also contains embossments 142 which extend from lower surface 144 and serve to space flange 134 from panel inner surface 122. Preferably, embossments 142 extend approximately 1 millimeter from flange 134. As shown in Fig. 14, the outer ends of flange 134 may curve slightly upwardly before attachment to panel 24'. Such ends are pressed down against panel 24' when fixtured or secured to the panel. Flange 134 also includes a large hole 143 located directly opposite the portion of tab 138 which receives stud 152. Hole 143 is provided to allow stud 152 to be placed through tab 138 so that stud head 153 can be welded or bonded to tab 138. The opposite end of stud 152 extending from tab 138 is to be fastened to the vehicle as described below. As shown in Fig. 14, hinge 130 is curved and preferably applied to panel 24' in a manner similar to that described for hinge 30 on panel 24. Panel surface 22' preferably includes a primer 50' corresponding to primer 50 and adhesives 46', 48' may be used in the same manner as adhesives 46, 48 for hinge 30.

Window assembly 12 may also include a gasket 13 (Figs. 3 and 9) mounted to inner surface 22 or to pinch weld flange 56 to seal window assembly 12 in the window opening 14 when panel 24 is in the closed position. A variety of seals may be used including a bubble seal such as described in copending, commonly-assigned United States patent application Serial No. 957,417, filed October 5, 1992, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. Other gaskets are

a described in copending, commonly-assigned United States patent application serial  
number 898,094 filed June 12, 1992, <sup>AS</sup> and United States patent application serial  
a number 897,764 <sup>AG</sup> filed June 12, 1992, both of which are also incorporated herein by  
reference. These later two disclosures are more pertinent to fixed window assemblies  
5 than articulated window assemblies. Yet another sealing arrangement is disclosed in  
copending, commonly-assigned United States patent application serial number 027,078  
a filed March 5, 1993, <sup>AG</sup> also incorporated herein by reference.

In manufacturing window assembly 12, hinges 30, 130 and disk 60 are  
preferably cleaned with isopropyl alcohol to remove any dirt and debris. The  
10 isopropyl alcohol is also used to clean the glass surface and/or frit coating 26 which  
will receive hinges 30, 130 and disk 60. After cleaning of the surfaces, panel surface  
22 and/or frit coating 26 receive adhesion-promoting primer compound 50 which is  
then allowed to dry. Optionally, while adhesion-promoting primer compound 50 on  
panel 24 is drying, the appropriate primer 50 may also be applied to bottom surface  
15 44 of hinges 30, 130 and to lower surface 62 of disk 60 and allowed to dry.

Primer 50 may be applied to hinges 30, 130 and disk 60 in a variety of  
ways, including using a dauber, a wipe, spray or other applicator. In a preferred  
embodiment, primer 50 is applied to hinges 30, 130 and disk 60 in one direction with  
a dauber wipe to obtain as uniform a coat as possible. If any bare spots appear after  
20 the initial cure time, another coat of primer 50 may be applied in the same direction.  
Automated systems such as robotic or conveyor systems may be used to carry out the  
application.

Once primer 50 has dried, the preferred urethane adhesive 46 is applied  
in a bead to hinges 30, 130 and disk 60. For single-piece application, adhesive 46  
25 may be applied using a glue gun, caulking gun or similar applicator. For multi-piece  
applications, robotic or conveyor applicators would be more appropriate. Sufficient

room is provided on hinges 30, 130 and disk 60 to receive the hot melt or thermoplastic fixturing adhesive 48 which may be applied using any of the above techniques.

5                    Soon after thermoplastic adhesive 48 is applied to mounting members 30, 32, 130, they are located on and engaged with the surface 22 of panel 24 overlying the frit coating 26. It is preferred that each mounting member 30, 32, 130 be temporarily held in place at least until thermoplastic fixturing adhesive 48 has set. If fixturing adhesive 48 is not used, mounting member 30, 32, 130 most likely will need to remain still relative to panel 24 for a longer period until bonding adhesive 46  
10                   cures. As mentioned above, this may be achieved by gravity, manual, or mechanical means. Each panel assembly 12 is then placed in a chamber where the assemblies are preferably cured at a temperature of approximately 90°F and a relative humidity greater than 85 percent. The holes extending through flange 34 of hinge 30, and through disk 60 allow the moisture in the curing chamber to permeate adhesive 46  
15                   which results in a net decrease in curing time. It has been found that a cure time of about six hours for flanges without holes can be decreased to about four hours for flanges with holes. Following the cure time in the chamber, the finished panel assemblies 12 are then ready for shipment to the vehicle manufacturer.

                    It is preferred that a moisture-activated urethane adhesive be used.  
20                   Window panel assemblies manufactured using the moisture-activated Morton Yokohama WS70-FK urethane adhesive, and the Morton Yokohama MS-90 and RC-50 primers, resulted in bonds between the mounting members and panels which withstood straight pull test tensional load greater than 250 pounds, and a vast majority withstood loads greater than 300 pounds. In at least two instances, the bonds  
25                   withstood tensional loads on the order of 400 pounds.

Other tests were conducted on the window assemblies which included thermal cycle tests, water immersion (80°C) for 100 and 240 hours, vibration tests, CASS, and impact tests. In general, the bonds between the mounting members and panel withstood loads, on average, greater than 225 pounds while loads greater than 250 pounds were achieved on average for panels subjected to immersion in 80°C water for 100 and 240 hours. Similar or better results were achieved on samples subjected to vibration, CASS and impact tests. Similar results can be achieved using the family or classes of adhesives described above.

The above description is considered that of the preferred embodiments only. Modification of the invention will occur to those skilled in the art and to those who make or use the invention. Therefore, it is understood that the embodiments shown in the drawings and described above are merely for illustrative purposes and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention, which is defined by the following claims as interpreted according to the principles of patent law, including the doctrine of equivalents.